

*Spoken at Noon 1798.
Mr Richards's School at Winchester*

ON THE LATE

1509/488-1/10/2
LORD CHATHAM.

Prize Poem.

BY FREDERIC IREMONGER.

The Author.

WHEN Vice and Hydra-Faction seize the helm
Of State, and Discord shakes the jarring realm,
There is, who dares disdain their lawless frown,
And dash Oppression from her tyrant throne,
Who dares the cause of Justice to defend,
His country's Champion, and his country's Friend.

: Such Chatham was—that quick, enlighten'd
soul,

That ardent zeal, indignant of controul,
That penetrating mind, that vivid fire,
That spotless rectitude of heart, conspire
To mark the patriot hero, and proclaim
A Chatham's merit, and a Chatham's fame.

While

75/102/14

While others hurl the thunderbolts of war,
 And mount exulting the triumphant car,
 'Twas his, illustrious patriot, to pursue 15
 A nobler object, and a brighter view ;
 'Twas his a nation's sinking fame to save,
 And rise to deeds, that live beyond the grave,
 To foster latent worth, and patriot zeal,
 And build on Virtue's base a Nation's weal. 20
 The perjur'd Statesman's boast, the Courtier's
 pride,
 That trimm'd his vessel to the shifting tide,
 The guilt of venal slaves, the flatterer's art,
 That felt corruption's magnet at his heart,
 Saw, like the Lord of Day, a Chatham's flame, 25
 Obscure their lustre, and eclipse their fame ;
 E'en Walpole shrunk amaz'd, nor dar'd defy
 The thunder of his lip, the lightning of his eye :
 No more he sat intrench'd in haughty state,
 Nor humbled him, he could not imitate, 30
 Check'd in his mad career of sordid gain,
 He own'd the stern repulse of young disdain ;
 For Chatham's quick imagination's ray
 Flash'd full conviction, and resistless day :

Truth



Truth by his words more radiant seem'd to shine, 35
 Vice seem'd more vicious, virtue more divine.

Ere yet I view him, with indignant zeal,
 Stand forth to vindicate his country's weal,
 I turn to happier scenes of private ease,
 Of social bliss, of piety, and peace; 40
 There truly great he liv'd, to all endear'd,
 And in majestic poverty rever'd:
 His steady soul no meaner cares could shake,
 He sav'd his country for his country's sake;
 With more than mortal ken his vivid eye 45
 Scann'd the dark regions of futurity;
 Conscious of high prophetic pow'rs it shone,
 Pierc'd the deep maze of time, and actions yet
 unknown.

Methinks I see the patriot hero stand,
 And arm with justice his vindictive hand. 50
 Mark! the big torrent rushes from his tongue!
 In fire unquenchable it rolls along.
 The venal Senate tremble at his frown,
 Embrace his counsels, and forget their own;
 Faction,

Faction, that once her flaming crest display'd, 55
 Affrighted starts, and lurks beneath the shade.

Nor less that genial ardor he refin'd,
 Whence Pity beams in love to all mankind,
 For see where Chelsea's vet'rans bend their way,
 Feeble with age, and tott'ring in decay; 60
 He listen'd, as they told the tale of war,
 Wept o'er their wounds, and counted every scar,
 'Twas then he knew the generous thought t'
 impart,
 And softly breathe persuasion to the heart,
 Then all the Father melted in his eye, 65
 Then spoke the Man, and dropt his dignity,
 Senates grew bounteous, as his periods flow'd,
 And cold indifference with compassion glow'd.

E'en now confessed before my wond'ring eyes,
 A hallow'd troop of British heroes rise, 70
 Heroes, O Chatham, by thine ardor fir'd,
 By thee protect'd, and by thee inspir'd;
 Quebec reveres thy Wolfe's undaunted might,
 And Abraham's Mount inclines his conquer'd
 height.

But

But ah ! why droops my heart ?—dost Britain's
bloom 75

Thus early fall, and wither in the tomb ?

Yet still is England his expiring care,

And when victorious shouts assail his ear,

“ Thank God, my Country's safe,”—the hero
cries,

Then lifts to heaven a grateful look,—and dies. 80

But lo ! what visions crowd upon my sight,

A Hawke, a Clive, an Amherst, all unite

To live, to fight, to die for England's cause,

To guard her freedom, and maintain her laws,

To crown her still “ The Sov'reign of the
Sea,” 85

And bid pale India tremble and obey ;

Holland retires, the Gaul and Spaniard weep,

And gaze reluctant on th' ensanguin'd deep ;

While tow'd in triumph o'er the subject tides,

In British ports the Gallic navy rides. 90

Or can the Muse forget how Chatham rose,

And glow'd congenial with Columbia's woes,

Oh !

Oh ! how he labour'd in her righteous cause !

Oh ! how he fought to guard her trampled laws !

Wept as she wept, and heav'd the kindred
sigh, 95

Compassion's dew-drop sparkling in his eye ;

Pierc'd by her grief, he propt her sinking weal,

And, as he saw the savage* point the steel,

Hell hound of ruthless war ; the patriot's soul,

Burnt fierce with vengeance, and disdain'd con-

troul. 100

Prophetic sage !—he bade Britannia spare

Her errors, and with all a mother's care

Whisper the sweetest sound of fond relief,

Sooth her despair, and mitigate her grief ;—

But when America's indignant pride 105

Disdain'd her parent, and her laws defi'd,

When mad Rebellion rais'd her sword on high,

And wav'd her banners in the murky sky,

† Conspiring provinces in vengeance rose,

‡ And the sun beam'd not, but on Albion's

foes, 110

* North American Indians.

† The Americans. ‡ Holland, France, and Spain.

Pleas'd with the storm of war, our Chatham's
might

Upheld his country, and maintain'd her right,
Wak'd her to battle, rous'd her into flame,
And bade her give the vollied light'nings aim.

Ah fatal zeal!—let darkness hide the day, 115
That snatch'd our Champion, and our Friend away,
The State's firm pillar, rose the mighty sage,
In the calm splendor of experienc'd age,
Thrice he assay'd to pour with dauntless ire,
The tide of eloquence, the stream of fire, 120
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice the impetuous soul
Was on the wing her thunders deep to roll—
Ah vain! the patriot-strife!—his tongue deny'd
Her wonted office, and Britannia's pride—
Shall I proceed?—let mute affliction tell 125
How Europe's boast, and Europe's guardian fell.

Yet ever in the dark and mournful hour,
Protecting Heaven! we own thine healing pow'r!
O thou the swift to hear, and strong to save,
Support us bending o'er the sacred grave, 130
Let

Let hope and comfort calm a nation's sighs,
 And future glories, future Chatham's rise,
 That History may revere the British name,
 Thron'd on the radiant base of deathless fame :
 Ev'n now the subject fires my lab'ring breast 135
 And Albion's long-drawn triumphs stand confest :
 I gaze—and lo ! from that unfathom'd deep,
 Where spectres of departed empires sleep,
 The British Oak high tow'rs, his roots bestrew'd
 With bones of patriots, water'd with their
 blood, 140
 Conflicting realms have scarr'd his trunk, and
 hurl'd
 The frantic bolts of a conspiring world—
 In vain—for stedfast as the laws of fate,
 He blooms with conscious majesty elate,
 With giant strength, and deathless verdure
 crown'd, 145
 Basks in ethereal light, and waves his arms
 around.

FINIS.



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